

BRIEFS

PRO-LIFE SIGNS GOING UP IN OK. RESTROOMS

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP) — Restrooms in Oklahoma will soon contain signs encouraging pregnant women to carry their babies to term after the State Dept. of Health approved regulations requiring all department-licensed facilities to place specially-worded signs in their public restrooms — even in abortion centers. However, pro-life efforts in Oklahoma also took a loss recently when the state's Supreme Court blocked a 2014 law requiring abortionists to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital. According to the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, Oklahoma's abortion rate was about half the national rate from 1991 to 2011.

SO. BAPTIST NOMINEE FOR EPA ATTACKED

WASHINGTON (BP) — Oklahoma attorney general Pruitt, President-elect Donald Trump's choice to lead the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and a member of First Church, Broken Arrow, is drawing praise despite charges by secular media outlets, environmentalists, and liberal clergy that his leadership could harm the environment. "Scott Pruitt is one of the finest, a committed follower of Christ and Oklahoma Baptist," Anthony Jordan, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, told the convention's Baptist Messenger news journal.

STORE CHAIN DEFUNDS PLANNED PARENTHOOD

NASHVILLE (BP) — Macy's Inc. has reportedly discontinued contributions to Planned Parenthood after customers complained of the retailing chain's support for the largest abortion provider in the country. Macy's Inc.'s latest 990 tax form verifies that the retail giant no longer includes the Planned Parenthood Federation of America in its community contributions, the research group 2ndVote said, describing the news as the latest "Miracle on 34th Street." Planned Parenthood performed 323,999 abortions in 2014, according to its latest annual report.

TELL SOMEONE

what Jesus has done for you!

2017 STATE EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

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JANUARY 29-30, 2017



Tell Me, Tell Someone flourishes in Indianola

By Tony Martin,
Associate Editor

For pastor Guy Burke of First Church, Indianola, the Tell Me, Tell Someone emphasis is a perfect fit for the church's ministry.

"This aligns with who we are," said Burke. "We exist to cultivate authentic followers of Christ. That's the vision that we have, so when this came about and we heard about it from other pastors and from the state convention, it looked like something we needed to engage in."

"It's why we exist. It wasn't about a program. It wasn't

about just trying something different. It was because we wanted to see authentic followers of Christ cultivated here in the Delta."

The emphasis and challenge are built around the numbers, "3-1-5-1." The numbers stand for:

- Praying for THREE lost people.
- Learning ONE spiritual conversation.
- Inviting FIVE people to church each week during the six weeks of the challenge.
- Sharing their faith with ONE person.

The emphasis includes four

Bible study lessons titled, The Unvarnished Truth, from Bible Studies for Life, a Sunday School curriculum distributed by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

"It was all about streamlining ministry by working through the existing Sunday School ministry," Burke explained. "In our context, our largest ministry when it comes to small groups is Sunday School, so we were able to leverage our existing ministry for efficient outreach and that gave our leaders and

see INDIANOLA on p. 4

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

It's that time again

Before you settle into your easy chair to nurse that sugar hangover from the holidays, consider this: The 2017 session of the Mississippi Legislature will be revving up in just a few days and Baptists need to be involved.

Legislators are our fellow Mississippians. For every citizen who feels free to regularly slam legislators, there are at least a few of us who realize that most legislators are well-meaning people who must put aside family matters, business decisions, and community activities for one-quarter of each year to come to Jackson for the session.

That's no small sacrifice, so it would behoove us to occasionally tell them how much we appreciate the effort even as we loudly complain about what we perceive they are doing or not doing.

Mississippi Baptists occupy influential positions. Greg Snowden, member of First Church, Meridian, is President Pro Tempore of the Senate. Phillip Gunn, member of Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, is Speaker of the House.

Sprinkled throughout the Legislature are numerous members of Mississippi Baptist churches serving in other forms of leadership such as committee chairs and vice-chairs. Many full-time employees of the Legislature are Mississippi Baptists, too.

The Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission (CAC) has some helpful hints on how to make contact with legislators, how to get a point across without dooming favored legislation, and how to follow up on the progress of important measures:

■ The best communicating is done face-to-face. Make an appointment and be on time. Bring an outline of the one or two main issues you want to discuss. Be brief, recommend specific solutions, and leave a written summary of your important points.

It's fair to ask the legislator for his/her position on the bills in which you are interested. Don't take it personally if the legislator disagrees with your position. Rather than argue, discuss differences in a reasonable manner.

■ If a personal visit is not possible, write or e-mail your legislator. Doing so can save a

legislator's time (a plus in your favor) and provide a record of your position on proposed legislation. Include your full name, address, and telephone number. The address for legislators while in session is P.O. Box 1018, Jackson, MS 39215-1018. Individual e-mail addresses can be accessed at legislature.ms.gov.

■ Do your research. Know the bills. Include any specific information you have such as the bill number and details. Bill status can be attained by calling (601) 359-3360 for the House of Representatives, and (601) 359-3229 for the Senate. These numbers are valid only while the legislature is in session. The web site is legislature.ms.gov.

■ Telephone calls do not substitute for personal visits and letters/e-mails. When telephoning legislators, however, make efficient use of your time with them. Identify yourself and the bills you are for or against (again, one or two main issues is a good limit). Explain your reasoning and let them know how you want them to vote.

The telephone number for legislators while they are in session is (601) 359-3770. Just as with personal visits and letters/e-mails, end the conversation by expressing your thanks for their time.

■ Citizens can request to testify before committees about bills they strongly support or oppose. Find out the name of the appropriate committee chairman and contact him/her as soon as possible. If given the opportunity to testify, get to the point quickly and be prepared to answer any questions legislators may have about your position.

The CAC, a ministry funded by the Mississippi Cooperative Program, stands ready to assist Mississippi Baptists who want to get involved in this grand process of self-governance we enjoy in our state and nation. They can be reached at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 329. E-mail: mccolham@christianaction.com.

Take the time to get involved, or else just be content with whatever compacts out of the legislative pipeline. Those are really our only two choices.

Special way to share faith

Take an 8½-by-11 sheet of paper and fold it in half. Now fold it in half again. Then fold it in half one more time, so that you're holding a pocket-size piece of paper.

Pray and think a few moments — perhaps off and on for a day or two or as long as need be — to seek God's guidance for a short phrase that might spark someone's interest in your journey of faith or the importance of Christ in your life. Write it on one side of the pocket-size folded paper.

On the other side, write your name, perhaps just your first name, and your cellphone number and/or email address.

Next, partly reopen the piece of paper, going back to the prior fold. In this section, write a few sentences about what your life was like before you placed your soul in Christ's care as the Son of God — your yearnings, struggles and/or emptiness. If you became a Christian as a youth, perhaps write a few sentences about what your life might have been like if Christ hadn't been your Savior and Lord.

Unfold the paper another time, back to the panel that is half of the full piece of paper. Here, write a few sentences about when you became a Christian — the juncture(s) when the Holy Spirit led you toward asking God's forgiveness for all your sins and surrendering your life to Christ. Or perhaps it might be the daily junctures when, nowadays, you turn to God for forgiveness and His guidance.

In the final step, fully unfold the paper and write out how a person can become a Christian, perhaps including a prayer that someone could pray to repent of sin and accept Christ's death on the cross as the eternal payment for our waywardness and, continuing in prayer, to surrender to Christ for His redeeming and transforming our souls as our Savior and Lord.

You needn't fill every blank space on the panels; just write what's on your heart. Certainly it's OK to practice with several sheets of paper to fine-tune this expression of your faith. Or you could write each panel on a notepad and transfer it to the appropriate place on the folded paper. Some people might do this on a computer, adjusting the margins to the size of each panel.



Guest opinion with Art Toalston

If you need some ideas for conveying this supernatural work of God, perhaps click the Knowing God tab at Baptist Press — bpnews.net — to go to Hope. Find It Here.

Once you have completed this venture over a few days or a week or two, use a copying machine to make a supply of the panels on both sides of the paper. Or take it to an office supply store that can make multiple copies.

Fold the copies and put them in one or more handy places — your bedroom for when you get dressed each day, and at your workplace. If you have a car, that also could be a good place.

Carry one or two with you each day to give to people as the Holy Spirit leads. In our busy world, it's difficult to strike up conversations with folks about your faith. This way, however, they can take your faith with them.

Say a prayer for each person that he or she might read through your words of faith in the coming days and encounter the love of God the Father and the inward presence of Jesus the Son through the tender, precious Holy Spirit.

There are many ways to share your faith. This is but one of them as a thankful response to God for our salvation, in keeping with the counsel in the New Testament Book of 1 Peter, verse 15, to always "be prepared to give an answer for the hope that you have."

Toalston is senior editor of Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention; and author of the ebooks, *When I Meditate*, and *Meditation & Morality*, with descriptors at arttoalston.com. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style.

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Moore apologizes, defends Trump remarks

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — The president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville has clarified that he never intended to criticize all evangelical supporters of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, noting many voters were motivated by "biblical convictions" and "voted their conscience."

In a Dec. 19 blog post, Biloxi native Russell Moore acknowledged "pointed conversations in my denominational family about the election" over the past month, "some of them... directed at me."

"I remember one situation where I witnessed a handful of Christian political operatives excusing immorality and confusing the definition of the Gospel. I was pointed in my criticisms, and felt like I ought to have been. But there were also pastors and friends who told me when they read my comments they thought I was criticizing anyone who voted for Donald Trump."

"I told them then, and I would tell anyone now, if that's what you heard me say, that was not at all my intention, and I apologize. There's a massive difference between someone who enthusiastically excused immorality and someone who felt conflicted, weighed the options based on biblical convictions, and voted their conscience," Moore wrote.

Moore's blog post was published the same day as a Wall Street Journal article with the headline "Baptist figure faces backlash over his criticism of Donald Trump." Moore has voiced criticism of Trump's candidacy since at least September 2015.

The Journal, to whom Moore provided an advance copy of his blog post, included comments of Moore by, among others, former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Church in Dallas; Louisiana Baptist Con-



MOORE



GRAHAM



HANKINS



HUCKABEE



MOHLER



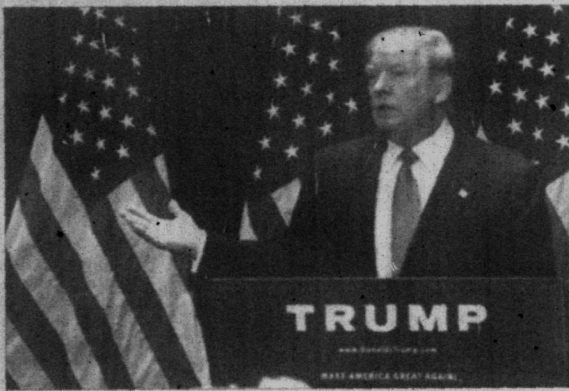
BARBIC

vention executive director David Hankins; and William Harrell, former SBC Executive Committee chairman from 2006-2008 and now a retired Georgia pastor.

Graham, a member of Trump's Evangelical Executive Advisory Board, cited Moore's criticism of Trump during the presidential campaign for alleged "disrespectfulness towards Southern Baptists and other evangelical leaders, past and present."

Noting that Prestonwood Church is "considering making major changes in our support of the Southern Baptist Convention," Graham said, "It's disheartening that this election has created this kind of divisiveness."

Hankins told The Journal he knows of churches that "have said they are going to" divert their



TRUMP

giving away from ERLC. Messengers to this year's Louisiana Baptist Convention annual meeting referred to the convention's executive board a motion regarding concerns about the ERLC.

Harrell made a similar observation about churches potentially withholding funds from the ERLC in a Nov. 15 blog post, stating the ERLC "was never meant to be a political voice which would promote a certain candidate or... discourage people from voting for another one."

As examples of allegedly inappropriate statements by Moore, Harrell cited a Sept. 2015 New York Times op-ed, in which Moore argued "evangelicals and other social conservatives" must "repudiate everything they believe" to support Trump, and a Jan. 2016 Roll Call article that quoted Moore as stating, "Ted Cruz is leading in the 'Jerry Falwell' wing [of evangelicalism], Marco Rubio is leading the 'Billy Graham' wing and Trump is leading the 'Jimmy Swaggart' wing."

Former Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, a former Arkansas pastor and governor, wrote in an email obtained

by Townhall.com, "I am utterly stunned that Russell Moore is being paid by Southern Baptists to insult them."

Trump tweeted in May, "Russell Moore is truly a terrible representative of Evangelicals and all of the good they stand for. A nasty guy with no heart!" to which Moore responded on MSNBC, "I am a nasty guy with no heart, which is why I need forgiveness of sins and redemption through the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Southern Seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr., Moore's former boss at the seminary, expressed support for Moore in an e-mail to The Journal. "I know his heart and his character and his love for the Southern Baptist Convention. I also have confidence in his ability to serve all Southern Baptists as president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission."

ERLC trustee chairman Ken Barbic, member of Capitol Hill Church in Washington, D.C., and a lobbyist for the produce industry, told Baptist Press (BP) in an e-mail that Moore "is a Gospel-centered and faithful voice for Southern Baptists."

"He speaks with prophetic clarity to the pressing cultural and ethical issues of our time, with which every Christian must wrestle. I am particularly grateful for his courageous and convictional leadership, under which I've observed within our convention and beyond, significant newfound energy and excitement about the work of the ERLC the last several years."

"I have had the privilege of seeing up close the remarkable efforts he leads the ERLC to undertake here in Washington, across this country, and abroad, all of which make me thankful for his leadership within the Southern Baptist Convention."

In his Dec. 19 blog post, Moore wrote, "When I went to the ballot box this year, for the first time in my life my conscience wouldn't allow me to vote for either major party candidate. For me, to vote for either candidate, I felt, would be to sin against my own conscience."

"That said, many Christians, including some of my very best friends and closest ministry partners, approached the ballot box conflicted but felt compelled to cast a ballot for the 'lesser of two evils,' hoping for the best with a less than ideal president."

"A possible temptation in situations like this is to take things personally — something I've been guilty of myself — but it's important that we not. We all owe it to our brothers and sisters in Christ to understand their convictions and be slow to judgment when biblical motivations are the primary motivators."

In the heat of an extraordinarily divisive campaign, that is something all of us, myself included, are wise to remember."

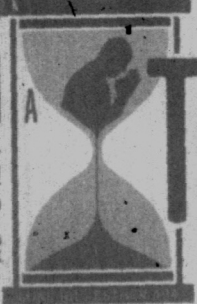
The full text of Moore's blog can be viewed at russellmoore.com/2016/12/19/election-thoughts-christmastime/.

Pray!

FOR
SUCH

2017
SOUTHERN
BAPTIST
CONVENTION

JUNE 13-14
PHOENIX



TIME
AS THIS

Theme announced for SBC annual meeting in Phoenix

PHOENIX (BP) — "Pray! For such a time as this" is the theme for the 2017 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting June 13-14 in Phoenix, anchored by Esther 4:14 and Luke 11:1, SBC President Steve Gaines has announced.

Prayer should be the top priority of every Christian, Gaines said in an interview outlining his choice. "The Southern Baptist Convention needs to be a people of prayer," Gaines said in the interview with SBC LIFE, journal of the SBC. "Only then will God send the power we need to fulfill the Great Commission."

He described the accompanying Scripture choices as both

personal and divine. "Esther 4 is the text God used to allow my name to be presented as a candidate for SBC president. 'Luke 11 records the only thing Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them — how to pray.'"

Prayer seeking revival and spiritual awakening will be the focus of the June 13 evening session of the annual meeting, Gaines said. "I want to encourage all of us to pray for spiritual awakening across the Southern Baptist Convention. I also want to pray that we will be a soul-winning denomination — to really tell people about Jesus Christ."

The artwork, incorporating prayer and an hourglass, hones the urgency of prayer. "God's timeline is running out, and I believe man's time is running out," Gaines said. "Jesus Christ is coming back, and I personally believe He could come back at any moment."

Jesus' pending return to earth should urge us to pray that lost souls be saved from hell, he said. "People are dying and they're entering eternity. If they don't have Jesus, they're going to hell. That motivates me to be about my Father's business — to pray, tell people about Jesus, win people to Christ, and help them become solid disciples."

Often as we come to a new year, people picture it as being a highway marked 2017 or whatever the year may be. Truth is there are easily 365 highways we're going to travel, each one of them with a sunrise and sunset and in-between, there may be wind and rain, heat and humidity. Scripture records in Joshua 1:3 that when God brought His people to the Promised Land, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses." They were about to go into the Promised Land and God was with them, but there were going to be challenges, opportunities, joys, and jolts they would experience as they travelled. It will be that way down Highway 2017, or down each one of those side roads day-by-day. Let me point out four wonderful truths that have similarities between what the Israelites were facing as they went into the land and what we are facing as we enter this new year.

The first truth I would mention is that it is unfamiliar territory. Not one of us has ever been down this road. The writer of Proverbs says, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (27:1). You and I do not know what tomorrow holds. We do not even fully understand what today holds. I have a friend who lived by a thought often repeated to his friends and coworkers: "Plan your work and work your plan." I remember the first time I heard him say it years ago, and thinking how clever and important that is to do. As he knew and as I certainly have experienced, life is filled with a multiplicity of detours. Planning your work is good, but working your plan is not always an easy matter. What we can and must do, though, is trust God for each step, each decision, and each plan. He knows where we are and where we need to be, what we're doing and how we can get done, what needs to be done, but on the other hand we live day-by-day in unfamiliar territory. You may be



With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Directions

young and some of the things you are facing are unfamiliar and you're trying to figure life out. You may be in mid-life but you are still in unfamiliar territory, and only God can guide you through the difficulties that you may face, the decisions you need to make, and the destination toward which you are headed. He knows and you do not.

The second truth that I would point out is there are unexpected transitions. In the story of Joshua, a whole nation of people had never known one day without Moses as their leader. The stories of what he had done and the magnificent leadership that he had given as he stood before the Pharaoh and led God's people out of Egypt and brought them across the Red Sea and into the wilderness and all the way to the Promised Land and then through the wilderness wanderings, proved he had been a great leader. The people grew up under his tutelage. They listened to his voice and watched him as he led and served but now, well, now things were different. Moses was dead and Joshua was the new, untried leader tasked with taking the Israelites into the Promised Land. Every one of us live with unexpected transitions taking place in our lives. You may lose a job or go to a new job and there are unex-

pected transitions there. A friend dies. Your mate passes. Children lose a parent. Life gets difficult. A new leader. A new friend. A new fellow-worker comes into your life, and it is not always easy to adjust. God knows what He's doing. He knows we have struggles with transitions. He comes and affirms to us that we can trust what He's doing and trust where we're going and trust Who is leading us.

A third truth I would bring up is that they had unanticipated troubles. I am convinced that troubles are just a part of the living process. I know we get in trouble when we make wrong decisions and go the wrong direction, but troubles are just a part of our lives. Whenever sin came into the world, the world was filled with weeds and thistles then, and all the products of sin are around us day-by-day and seem to get in our way and cause trouble over and over. It will be that way in this world. We don't need to be down in the mouth and borrow tomorrow's troubles today, but don't be naive either and just ignore that whatever road you're going down — sometimes it seems like all of them — has its own pre-arranged trouble waiting on you. You do not need to be heavy-hearted and just throw up your hands in despair, for God will be with

you. In the good times, He will be there. In the bad times, He will be there. Press on down the road in 2017 even with the troubles you run into around the curve.

There's a fourth truth that I need to give you and you don't need to travel without it: there are unlimited triumphs. As the people of God entered into the promises of God, what I've described above is factual but there were unlimited triumphs, too — touches of God, revelations from God, experiences with God, that were just astounding. You can walk through the Book of Joshua and see the triumphs unfold. A new leader takes them across the Jordan River. It was at flood tide, but God stopped the river and the people walked over on dry ground under His guidance and Joshua's instructions. Soon after getting to the other side of the river and into the edge of the Promised Land, they came up against a huge obstacle: the city of Jericho. They were worried and in despair, and God said, "Watch what I'm going to do." You remember the story that Joshua led them out to circle the city, once each day for six days and then on the seventh day seven times. Then God shook the place. God crumbled the walls of Jericho. The walls of Jericho came tumbling down.

Unlimited triumphs can be yours. The things you worry about so much, God can handle. The decisions for which you can't find answers, God loves you and He still can handle them. He is not going to leave you nor forsake you. He is not going to turn away from you. He is going to wrap His arms of love around you and He is going to give you victories. Would you trust God to guide you every day in every way and use you to be a part of unlimited triumphs and great victories that will take place in His Kingdom work as we travel this road together? God bless you, and Happy New Year!

The author can be contacted at
directions@mbcb.org.

INDIANOLA

cont. from p. 1

teachers something tangible they could resonate with."

Burke wanted buy-in from the leadership before kicking off the ministry. "It all began with our deacon's retreat in July. I used part of our retreat to introduce it to our leaders. I said, 'Hey guys, this is from the state convention. I think it's a good idea, but I need you to help make it a great idea.' That's where it began. We had a follow-up event to catch some deacons who missed the retreat."

"From there we met with our Sunday School teachers. We had Roger Orman [team leader for Sunday School/Small Groups at the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board] come share the vision. Then, we went to the equipping and engagement phase. December 4 was our celebration Sunday."

During the first week of the church's engagement phase, 150 people were prayed for through Sunday School. Thirty individuals learned a Gos-

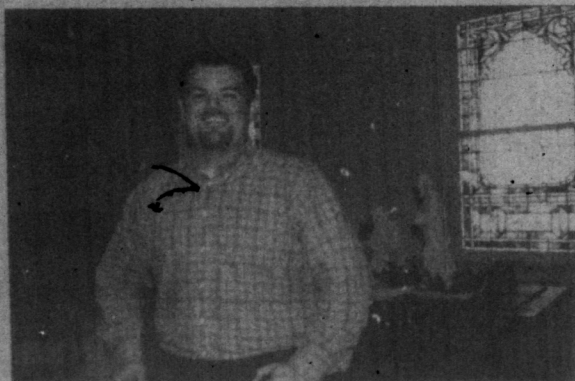
"We did this because of life impact. It's not necessarily because of numbers. It's a two-way street. If you're going to invite, pray, and share, it will impact their lives and yours. It's not a program. It's a process, and it folds right into what you're already doing."

Guy Burke

pastor of
First Church, Indianola

pel presentation. There were 34 individuals inviting others to Sunday School, with 55 Gospel presentations taking place.

"This gave people something they could grasp," said Burke. "Just looking at the landscape, we wanted something easy to communicate, to execute. The 3-1-5-1 is a tangible process, and it was easy for people to remember."



BURKE

"From the get-go, people came to the meetings. They contacted me, telling me stories about who they were praying for, who they'd invited, who they prayed for. For the last couple of months this has been our ministry. On Wednesday nights, I preached through the process, using each number of the 3-1-5-1 strategy."

"This isn't a program. It's an ongoing thing. We want to see it built into the culture of who we are. I was careful to say from the platform, 'You know, guys, if you have this categorized as just another thing the preacher wants to do, or you see it as just another program to try, I pray that you remove it from that category.'"

"One Sunday School teacher noted, 'I've been a Sunday School teacher for ten years and don't remember a specific lesson on sharing a Gospel presentation. One of the things I'm taking away is that I'm learning a Gospel presentation through this process.'"

The church is planning on three baptisms soon as a result of the emphasis. There have been six professions of faith, with an additional ten people presenting themselves for church membership.

As an encouragement to other pastors who might wish to get involved in Tell Me, Tell Someone, Burke said, "We did this because of life impact. It's not necessarily because of numbers. It's a two-way street. If you're going to invite, pray, and share, it will impact their lives and yours. It's not a program. It's a process, and it folds right into what you're already doing."

Tell Me, Tell Someone, is supported by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program. For more information, visit mbcb.org/tellsomeone/.

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2. I want forgiveness for my sins
and freedom from eternal
death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose
from the grave to forgive my sins
and to restore my relationship
with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ
into my life. From this time on,
I want to live in a loving relationship
with Him. (I receive Christ as
my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave
the right to become children of God, even to
those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)
If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a
local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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IUQ QDT JXU MQLUI HEQHYDW.

BKAU JMUDJO-EDU: JMUDJO-VYLU

Clue: B = L

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible
knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been en-
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throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to
last week's puzzle: Acts 9:5

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College and Seminary News

► A symposium and concert at **Mississippi College** on January 14 will celebrate Eudora Welty's incredible gifts as an iconic Southern writer. Leaders of the Arts Council of Clinton will sponsor the program "Inspira-tions by Welty" at the university's Aven Fine Arts Building. The event that Saturday on the Clinton campus will feature speakers such as Welty scholars Suzanne Marrs and Elizabeth Crews.

► **Southeastern Seminary** had two Mississippi graduates this fall. They are Morgan Elyse Graves, Laurel, Master of Arts in Inter-cultural Studies; and Jacob Marshall Kirchner, Ridgeland, Master of Divinity with Interna-tional Church Planting.

► Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel will deliver the keynote address at **Mississippi College's** Spring 2017 scholarship dinner. The program is set for the evening of April 18 at Anderson Hall in the B.C. Rogers Student Center. Earlier in the day, Hagel is expected to meet with students and field questions from Mississip-pi reporters at a news conference at the Baptist-affiliated institution. The dinner begins at 6 p.m.

MS POSITIONS

NEW HOPE BAPTIST CHURCH, 6573 HWY 145 MERIDIAN MS, IS AN ACTIVELY GROWING CHURCH. We're prayerfully seeking a bi-vocational youth minister to engage and be passionate about our youth. Please email resume to newhopebyouth-ministriesearch@gmail.com

NORTHSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH IN VICKSBURG, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR OUR PASTOR POSITION. Send resumes to Diane Pennington 109 Edgewater Dr Vicksburg, MS 39183

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically

via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newspaper are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: haptistrecord@mbcb.org

THE VILLAGE VIEW



Sean A. Milner, Executive Director

P.O. Box 27

Clinton, MS 39060-0027

(601) 922-2242

www.baptistchildrensvillage.com

GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor with taste and respect, things who are and have been special to our special friends.

DECEMBER 1-15

HONORS

Troy & Kathy Alford
Ms. Jane Wilkinson
Philene Allen
Joy SSC, FBC Cleveland
Brecken Anderson
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
Bremman & Elizabeth Anderson
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
Patsy & Perry Atherton
Mrs. Virginia H. Atherton
Mrs. Carolyn Baxter
Koenagers, Immanuel BC
Erika Berthelot
Don & Suzanne Honea
Jennifer & David Blakeslee
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
Mrs. Marilyn Brady
Mrs. Linda Meyer
Bro. Tom & Mrs. Vernia Burris
Don & Suzanne Honea
Joy Carpenter
Mrs. Jan Wallace
Charlotte & John Chapman
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
Robert & Megan Chapman
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
Stephini & Chuck Chapman
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
George & Ann Chunn
Mr. & Mrs. Durrell Chunn
Judy & Lance Cleveland
Mrs. Virginia H. Atherton
Cameron, Brian, Payton & Nikolai Coon
Kelli, Brad, Collie &
Bo Campbell
Mrs. Cindy Crain
Jerry & Becky Thomas
Drs. Bob & Tom Coward
Mr. Bill Watson
Winta & James R. Earnest
Gerald & Dottie Buchanan
Surgical Clinic Associate

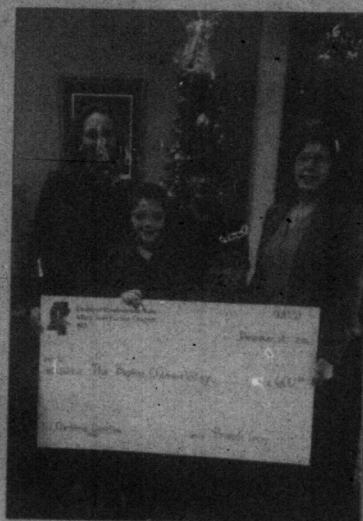
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Jo & Bobby Fairburn
Mrs. Virginia H. Atherton
Jamie & Dana Fortinberry
Don & Suzanne Honea
David "Cotton" Foster
Jenny Foster
Mr. Gina Gianfrancesco
Mr. E. J. Trosclair
Mary Jane Gibson
Jonathan Gibson, Elain & Elzey
Gibson
Donna & Lamar Gordon
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Mrs. Martha Goylon
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
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Tina Glen & Marilyn Graves
Twila Rawson
Jimmy & Susan Hardy
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Lynn Harrington
Dr. & Mrs. Vic Walsh
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Lee Hopoe
Don & Suzanne Honea
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Peggy D. & Fred T. Hurst
Gerald & Dottie Buchanan
Mr. & Mrs. Lamont Jarrell
Dr. & Mrs. Bill Wolverton
Mrs. Willie Frances Jones
Glynn & Jean Jones
Susan Kackley
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
Jeanette Kirby
Mr. & Mrs. Blake Milner
Mrs. Helen Lammons
Mrs. Edith M. Aldridge
Kathy & John Lawworthy
Gerald & Dottie Buchanan
Gloria Leach
Ladies Adult IV SSC, McGool BC

Mrs. Barbara Little
Mrs. E. J. Grisham, Sr.
Lydia & Elizabeth Long
Mrs. Patricia C. Duckworth
Amy, Jay & Lucy Hutton
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
Libby Matthews
Mrs. Jan Wallace
Katie McKnight
Don & Suzanne Honea
Dr. & Mrs. Ken McRaney
Ms. Betty Rhines
Linda Milner
Mrs. Jan Wallace
Jason & Leah Kackley
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
Sarah, Noah & Molly Kackley
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
Phil & Jackie Murray
Mr. & Mrs. Ken Wilkinson
Dr. Harold Newcomb
Ms. Laura Walker
Helen Oglesbee
North Columbia BC, Adult III
SSC
Mr. & Mrs. Virgil Palmer
Children & Grandchildren
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Parrott
Ms. Betty Rhines
Libby Patterson
Twila Rawson
Rev. & Mrs. Harold D. Scott
Helen E. Smiley
Rev. Titus & Pam Tyre
Sandra C. Benjamin & Family
Mr. & Mrs. Branton Riley
Ms. Betty Rhines
Edwin Rowley
North Columbia BC, Adult III
SSC
Julie Kathy Russell
Miss Celeste Cade
Mary Salter
Mr. & Mrs. Gary T. Woodham
Mrs. Betty Smylie
Don & Suzanne Honea
Myrtis Tabb
Joy SSC, FBC Cleveland
Phillip, Megan & Teddie Grace
Clapman
Rev. & Mrs. Ken Anderson
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sharp
Ms. Betty Rhines
The Kris White Family
Robin & Cathy White
The Ray Hopkins Family
Robin & Cathy White
E. J. "Bubby" Trosclair
Mr. & Mrs. Gino Gianfrancesco
Dan & Elsie Wells
Don & Suzanne Honea
Mrs. Dot Willoughby
Mrs. E. J. Grisham, Sr.
The Kris White Family
Robin & Cathy White
Mr. & Mrs. Johnny Yates
Ms. Betty Rhines

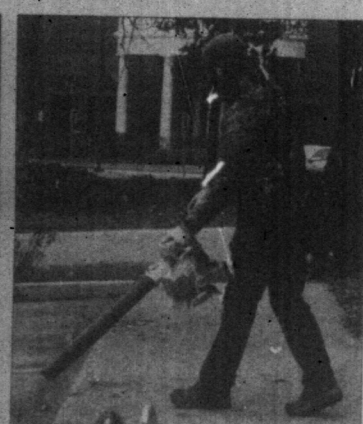
DECEMBER 1-15

MEMORIALS

Claudell Arnold
U. City BC
Stanton BC
Wayne Bagley
Jim & June Blair
Claudine Baker
Glen & Donna King
Annie Ruth Beall
Miss Sarah Marie Smith
Billy, Reba & Betty Chapman
Jerry & Wanda Chapman
Tayler Blalock
H. B. & Katy McKnight
Phyllis Ashcraft Blake
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Coward
Mr. James Blakeney
The Alexander & Hester
Families
Mr. Larry Blakeney
The Alexander & Hester
Families



(At left) Penny Contest at **HILLCREST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** with a \$150 matching gift from the Mary Ann Forrest Chapter of the Order of Confederate Rose. \$600 check presented by organizer Brandi Gray. Pictured also are second graders from the winning class. From left to right: Brandi Gray, Molly Godbold, Brayden Gray (6th Grade), Amari McNeal. (At right) Pictured with Gray is other Order of Confederate member Robbie Lewis and Chrystelle Thames of The BCV.



CAMPBELL GLOBAL, LLC in Flowood, MS gave a \$2,750 matching gift to The BCV Giving Tuesday Campaign and followed up that gift with volunteer hours doing clean up and landscaping at The BCV Headquarters.



The Prayer Shawl Ministry-Wrapped in Love of **BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH, MERIDIAN** provided quilts and hats for BCV residents for Christmas. Pictured is Cathy Webb, Sandra Shirley, and Geraldine Bateman.

Challenged • Joshua 24:14-28

Faithfulness grows through reflection, evaluation, and renewed commitment to God. Joshua reflected on what the Lord had done with the words, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel..." (Joshua 24:2-13). He began with Terah, the father of Abraham. He declared how God had been faithful to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Joshua reminded the Israelites of Moses and their rescue from Egypt. He concluded God's words with, "I have given you a land for which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant" (v. 13). What a reminder of God's faithfulness through the history of the Israelites!

The Example Set - Joshua 24:14-15

After citing God's acts of faithfulness, Joshua said, "Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served..." (v. 14). Joshua challenged the Israelites to remain faithful to God, worshipping only Him. Joshua gave the Israelites two choices: serve God or serve worship other gods. Joshua declared that regardless of the choice made by the Israelites, his family would serve God alone. Then he set the example by saying, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (v. 15).

The People's Reflection - Joshua 24:16-18

The Israelites recalled God's deliverance from Egypt, His provisions on the journey, and His giving them the promised land as motivation for remaining faithful to God. Then the Israelites hastily answered Joshua's challenge and declared their allegiance. They cried out, "We also will serve the Lord, for He is our God" (v. 18). Believing that the Israelites had not thought through their decision, Joshua reminded them to consider the cost of following God and then warned them about the seriousness of their commitment.

A Somber Warning - Joshua 24:19-20

Joshua spoke to his leaders first. He reminded them of God's faithfulness. Then he warned the leaders saying, "Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the Lord your God promised you, so the Lord will bring upon you all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the Lord your God has given you. When you have transgressed

the covenant of the Lord your God...and have gone and served other gods...then the anger of the Lord will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you" (Joshua 23:15-16, NKJV). Just as God had blessed them, He would also punish them if they turned away from Him.

After warning the leaders, Joshua gathered the tribes together and warned the people that remaining faithful to God would be difficult. The people pledged to remain faithful; however, Joshua emphasized

that the decision to follow God required serious evaluation and should not be taken lightly. He told the people to count the cost of worshiping and serving God. He said, "If you forsake the Lord and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good" (Joshua 24:20). Once again, the people said they would follow God. They renewed their commitment to serve God.

A Public Declaration - Joshua 24:21-28

After the people declared their intention of following God wholeheartedly,

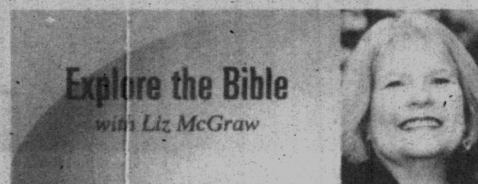
Joshua directed them to rid themselves of all idols. The people committed to worship God alone, and Joshua created a marker as a testimony of their covenant to do so. The large stone served as a reminder that they would worship only the Lord - and that is what the Israelites did. They served the Lord throughout Joshua's leadership and through the time of the elders following Joshua.

How does Joshua's story apply to us? Just as God used Joshua's faithfulness, He also will use our faithfulness to challenge and influence others. So ask yourself, "How is my faithfulness to the Lord challenging and influencing others?"

Second, believers can hold one another accountable for remaining faithful to God. Do you have a friend or two who will hold you accountable? Who will ask you tough questions when they see you straying from the Lord?

Third, God expects His followers to be fully devoted to Him with no divided allegiances. As we begin a new year, let's reflect on what the Lord has done in each of our lives. Let's evaluate our commitment to the Lord. Do we have any divided allegiances? Are we hanging on to our own idols? If so, let's rid ourselves of all idols and renew our commitment to follow God alone!

McGraw is development director of Crossroads SW Counseling Center, a conference speaker, life coach, and member of Woodville Church.



Explore the Bible

with Liz McGraw

God's Word is Truth • Psalm 119:153-160

Today's lesson is the final session of our six week study titled "Spoken: The Rhythm of God's Word" from the 119th Psalm. This lesson's title, "God's Word is Truth," picks up on one of the main themes we have seen in this unit of study.

The last verse of our focal passage hones in on this major biblical principle. "The entirety of Your word is truth," Psalm 119:160a (HCSB). The "forever" of this verse takes on greater meaning when we look through the lens of our New Testament faith. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever," Hebrews 13:8 (KJV). Our understanding of "forever" expands when we think of it as all of yesterday, and today, and all of forever without end - eternity. "All Your righteous judgments forever" is the psalmist's bold assertion that the Bible's righteous judgments [word of truth (v. 160a), "Your instruction" (v. 153b), promises (v. 154b), "Your statutes" (v. 155), "Your decrees" (v. 157b), "Your precepts" (v. 159a)] endure forever - endlessly eternity.

The audacity of the Old Testament author only intensifies when he stresses "the entirety of Your word." The Holy Spirit inspired and preserved word of God as we have in the Christian Bible is totally, entirely true without any mixture of error, it is totally infallible. Again our faith is strengthened

and clarified by New Testament revelation. Paul wrote Timothy:

"And how from childhood you have known the sacred writings (Hebrew Scriptures) which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus [surrendering your entire self to Him and having absolute confidence in His wisdom, power and goodness]. All Scripture is God-breathed [given by divine inspiration] and is profitable for instruction, for conviction [of sin], for correction [of error and restoration to obedience], for training in righteousness [learning to live in conformity to God's will, both publicly and privately - behaving honorably with personal integrity and moral courage], 2 Timothy 3:15-16 (AMP).

The psalmist emphasizes the entirety of the Bible is true. The concept of real reliable "truth" is worthy of our attention if we are to understand the importance of the statement, "I have not turned from Your decrees," Psalm 119: 157b (HCSB). Truth is hard, even

impossible, for a sinful person to understand. Truth is not an abstract philosophical theory. Because it is not an abstract idea, God loved us enough to make love very concrete; where even a child can experience it and trust it. John the New Testament Gospel writer explains it this way:

"Jesus answered him [Thomas], "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one goes to the Father except by me. Now that you have known me," he said to them, "you will know my Father also, and from now on you do know him and you have seen him," John 14:6-7 (GNB). Salvation and understanding comes to us

through God's love.

The 119th Psalm says it this way, "Consider how I love Your precepts; LORD, give me life according to Your faithful love," Psalm 119:159 (HCSB). The psalmist understood the absolute truth that God and God alone gives us life. "God is the author of all life both physical and spiritual. Fortunately, for us, "God is love," 1 John

4:8b (HCSB). Not whimsical fleeting love but "faithful love." Do you know God's "faithful love?"

As you consider this question it could lead you to "meditate on Your [God's] wonders," as we are taught to do in verse 27. And verse 48 challenges us to "meditate on Your [God's] statutes." As you honestly ask yourself if you know God's "faithful love," and if the answer is yes then you will naturally meditate on God's wonders. Thinking of God's gift of life through Jesus Christ will cause us to feel similar to the biblical writer when he says, "Let me live, and I will praise You; may Your judgments help me," Psalm 119:175.

When God gives us life we should praise Him. This leads us to tell others about God's grace and love for us. A great way to do this is to share our testimony of God's care for us with others in our Sunday School class. But honestly that can seem hard to do at times. So, I want to point to the help God just offered us in the 175th verse. Did you notice the psalmist prayerful request "may Your judgments help me"? You, too, can ask God to teach you His judgments and help you witness and praise Him.

Hicks is associational missions director for Jasper Association in Bay Springs.



Bible Studies for Life

with Don Hicks

Just for the Record



Joyful Noise, **FIRST CHURCH, FLORA**, sings Christmas carols to area nursing homes and assisted living residents every year. The senior adult group sang at five different places on two occasions.



Children and youth from **CALVARY CHURCH, VICKSBURG**, presented Really, Really, Really Good News to church members, family, and friends.



TOOMSUBA CHURCH, LAUDERDALE ASSOCIATION, held a baby dedication for Priscilla Elise Collings, daughter of Jeremy and Mandy, Dec. 4. Steven Wade officiated.



Kids from **CALVARY CHURCH, SUMMIT**, presented Sing a Song of Christmas Dec. 4. Farah Alexander and Bobbie Dunaway, directors; Mike Burns, pastor.



The children's choir of **PLEASANT HILL CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO**, presented Shepherds, Sheep, & A Savior Dec. 10. Jacob Glasz, student minister/children's choir director; Floyd Higginbotham, pastor.



Members and guest of the JOY Club of **FIRST CHURCH, EUPORA**, celebrated Christmas at a recent potluck luncheon.

College News



Cindy Melton has been named dean of the **MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE** School of Education. A full-time Mississippi College faculty member since 2001, Melton served as chair of the Department of Teacher Education and Leadership in recent years. She's taught classes in the department the past 15 years.



The **BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE** chapter of Theta Alpha Kappa, the national honor society for students of Religious Studies and Theology, inducted four new members into the society. They included (back row, left to right) Michael Green, a senior Christian Ministry major from Horn Lake; Devin Woodruff, senior Biblical Studies major from Booneville; Josh Dowling, a senior Biblical Studies/English major from Byhalia; and Jacob Riley, a sophomore Biblical Studies/English major from Hernando. Also present were (front row, left to right) Douglas Bain, chair of the Department of Biblical and Associated Studies and TAK sponsor; Jacob Worley, treasurer; Mary Kate King, TAK member; Avery Thorn, president; and Ronald Meeks, Professor of Biblical and Associated Studies and TAK sponsor.